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July 8, 2004

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BALTIMORE MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN FOREIGN SEX TRAVEL CASE

Baltimore, Maryland – United States Attorney Thomas M. DiBiagio announced today that Richard Arthur Schmidt, age 61, of Baltimore, Maryland pleaded guilty in United States District Court today to one count of Travel by a United States Citizen in Foreign Commerce For the Purpose of Engaging in Illicit Sexual Conduct with a Minor in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2423(b) and one count of Travel by a United States Citizen in Foreign Commerce and Engaging in Illicit Sexual Conduct with a Minor, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2423(c). The offenses to which Schmidt pleaded guilty involved the sexual molestation of a minor teenage boy in Cambodia in December of 2003.

The guilty plea stems from a ten-count federal indictment lodged in early February of this year in which Schmidt was charged with numerous offenses relating to the sexual exploitation of minor boys in the Philippines and Cambodia. The indictment was unsealed on February 18th when U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents brought Schmidt from Cambodia after having been deported from that country.

According to an affidavit in support of an application for his arrest, Schmidt is a U.S. citizen, who is on parole in the State of Maryland and on three previous occasions, has been convicted in Maryland state courts of crimes relating to the sexual molestation of minors. According to the affidavit, in 1987, Schmidt was sentenced in Baltimore City Circuit Court to serve an 18 year prison

sentence as a result of multiple sexual offenses, which stemmed from his sexual involvement with minor boys. He was released on parole in 2000 after serving 13 years of the sentence.

In May 2002, Maryland parole authorities issued an arrest warrant for Schmidt after a Baltimore family alleged he had sexually molested their minor son. According to the affidavit, Schmidt left Maryland and flew to the Philippines, arriving there in the first week of June 2002.

According to the statement of facts submitted in support of Schmidt's guilty plea, in December of 2003, Schmidt traveled from the Philippines to Cambodia, arriving in Phnom Penh on December 1. On December 27th, he engaged in illicit sexual conduct with a 13 year old boy. Cambodian National Police Officers arrested Schmidt that day.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents learned of Schmidt's December 27th arrested and also learned that he had been charged in both the Philippines and in Cambodia for other crimes stemming from the sexual molestation of minors in those countries. Schmidt's other charge in Cambodia stemmed from sexual contact with two minors occurring a few days before committing the offense that was the subject of today's guilty plea. He was held in custody in Cambodia until his deportation to the United States on February 18, 2004.

The crimes with which Schmidt was charged were passed into law on April 30, 2003 as part of a law known as the PROTECT ACT. It is believed that this case is the first unconditional plea to these new crimes. Schmidt faces a maximum sentence of 60 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each charge to which he pled guilty. United States District Judge Andre M. Davis has scheduled sentencing for August 24, 2004.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Diplomatic Security Service of the Department of State, the Cambodian National Police and the Australian Federal Police and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Andrew Norman and Michael Hanlon.